

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAM-01 IO-13

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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9712

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 6441

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SY, LE

SUBJECT: SYRIAN PLANNING TO PACIFY KOURA REGION AND
RETURN GREEK ORTHODOX REFUGEES TO THEIR HOMES

1. EMBOFFS LEARNED FROM A KEY GREEK ORTHODOX BISHOP SEPT. 22 THAT SYRIAN MILITARY WORKING WITH CHEHABIST DEUXIEME BUREAU OFFICERS AROUND SARKIS TO SECURE KOURA REGION FROM CONTROL BY MARONITE BRIGANDS, FACILITATE RETURN OF ORTHODOX REFUGEES TO THEIR HOMES (BISHOP ESTIMATED ABOUT 26,000 OF THEM HAD FLED TO SYRIA) AND IN EFFECT SEAL OFF THIS REGION FROM FURTHER FIGHTING. BISHOP SAID HE HAD MET SEVERAL TIMES WITH COL. MUHAMMAD AL-KHULI AND WITH CHEHABISTS TO ESTABLISH COMMITTEE THAT WOULD SUPERVISE PACIFICATION EFFORTS. COMMITTEE WOULD INCLUDE BOTH SYRIAN AND LEBANESE OFFICERS PLUS SOME CIVILIANS; HE HIMSELF HAD BEEN NOMINATED TO SERVE ON COMMITTEE AS REPRESENTATIVE OF PATRIARCH.

2. COMMENT: CREATION OF ABOVE COMMITTEE INDICATES CONTINUING SYRIAN INTEREST IN USING ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH LEBANESE CHRISTIANS TO HELP BRING PARTIAL RELIEF TO
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REFUGEES WHO FLED HOMES IN TERRITORY NOW DOMINATED

BY CHRISTIANS. FIRST SYRIAN SUCCESS WAS RETURN OF LARGELY
SHIITE REFUGEES TO NABAA FROM BAALBEK. SUCESS OF EFFORTS
OUTLINED BY BISHOP WOULD CONSTITUTE ADDITIONAL STEP FROM
WHICH SARKIS WOULD DERIVE SOME CREDIT, AND WOULD CON-
TRIBUTE TO EASING OF SYRIA'S REFUGEE BURDEN BY ESTABLISHING
PATTERN FOR FUTURE RETURN OF REFUGEES TO OTHER PARTS OF
LEBANON.

MURPHY

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Message Attributes

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